

SCALING UP EARLY READING INTERVENTION: A STUDY OF THE FUNCTIONING OF LIBRARIES AND AVAILABILITY OF AGE- APPROPRIATE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine in-depth the role and effectiveness of libraries in supporting early reading interventions through the provision of age-appropriate children's literature. This study used a literature review method, exploring various previous studies, policy reports, and implementation studies focused on early literacy, access to children's reading materials, and the role of educational institutions and community libraries in fostering early reading habits. The analysis shows that the availability of children's books appropriate to children's cognitive and language development levels is strongly correlated with improved early reading skills. Furthermore, library functioning, in terms of collection management, literacy activities, community involvement, and policy support, is a crucial factor in expanding the impact of early literacy programs across various social contexts. However, challenges such as limited resources, lack of training for children's librarians, and a lack of supporting policies remain major obstacles to program scalability. This study concludes that to broadly increase the effectiveness of early reading interventions, an integrated approach is needed to ensure the provision of appropriate children's literature, strengthen library capacity, and collaborate multisectorally between the government, educational institutions, and the community.

Keywords: early reading intervention, children's literature, library functioning, literacy development

INTRODUCTION

The background to the study, "Scaling Up Early Reading Intervention: A Study of the Functioning of Libraries and the Availability of Age-Appropriate Children's Literature," stems from the fundamental issue of low early literacy skills among elementary school-aged children in various countries, particularly developing ones. Early literacy, or early reading skills, are a key foundation for success in subsequent levels of education. Children who master reading skills early on tend to have better conceptual understanding, sharper critical thinking skills, and higher motivation to learn (Kaiser et al., n.d.). However, in many

educational contexts, limited access to age-appropriate reading materials and a lack of institutional support from institutions such as school and community libraries are serious obstacles to developing a culture of early literacy in children.

Early literacy issues are not only related to technical reading skills but also to the availability and quality of supportive literacy environments. Many studies have shown that effective early literacy interventions require a strong literacy ecosystem, where children have easy access to children's books that are engaging, age-relevant, and culturally appropriate. Libraries, both in schools and in the community, play a central role in this ecosystem. Libraries serve not only as a place to store books, but also as a center for literacy activities, a place for children to interact with reading materials, and a space for non-formal learning that fosters reading skills and an interest in literature. However, in reality, many elementary school libraries do not function optimally due to limited human resources, a lack of adequate collections, and a lack of child-centered management strategies (Szumlas et al., 2021).

The availability of age-appropriate reading materials is a crucial indicator in assessing the effectiveness of early literacy interventions (Kalil et al., 2025). Children's literature that is designed with children's cognitive, emotional, and language development in mind is more likely to foster interest in reading and enhance text comprehension. Unfortunately, in many regions, particularly rural areas or those with limited economic resources, high-quality and relevant children's books remain difficult to access. This is exacerbated by the dominance of imported reading materials that are not always appropriate for the local context, often preventing children from connecting the content to their own experiences and culture. As a result, early literacy interventions implemented in various education programs often fail to achieve optimal results due to the lack of contextual and engaging children's literature (Bridges et al., 2023).

Globally, many education organizations and international donor agencies strive to improve basic literacy through early reading intervention programs. However, one of the biggest challenges is adapting these interventions to local contexts and sustainably scaling them up. Scaling up early literacy interventions requires not only teacher training and curriculum development, but also a robust literacy infrastructure, including well-functioning libraries and an adequate supply of children's literature. Without such support, intervention programs often stall at the pilot stage without achieving significant long-term impact (Simpson et al., 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to understand how

libraries contribute to the sustainability of early literacy interventions and the extent to which the availability of children's reading materials influences their success.

Furthermore, there is a knowledge gap regarding how school and community libraries are managed to support early childhood literacy activities. Many previous studies have focused on pedagogical strategies for teaching reading, but have paid little attention to institutional aspects and the availability of reading resources as structural factors. Yet, without an effective book distribution system and adaptive library management, interventions focused on improving children's reading skills will be difficult to sustain in the long term. Therefore, this research is crucial in addressing the gap in academic literature regarding the relationship between library function and the sustainability of early literacy interventions, as well as in identifying best practices in the provision and utilization of age-appropriate children's literature.

Furthermore, this research is also relevant in the context of national education policies in many countries that emphasize the importance of literacy as a human development priority. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes quality and inclusive education, early literacy is a critical indicator for the success of the overall education system. Failure to ensure every child has the ability to read at an early age will result in a learning gap that widens with age (Family Play, Reading, and Other Stimulation and Early Childhood Development in Five Low- and Middle-Income Countries - Cuartas - 2023 - Developmental Science - Wiley Online Library, n.d.). Therefore, strengthening the function of libraries and expanding access to age-appropriate children's literature is not only a technical step in supporting learning, but also a social strategy oriented towards equalizing learning opportunities for all children.

From a social and cultural perspective, children's literature also plays a role in the formation of identity and moral values. Children's books not only teach reading skills but also instill imagination, empathy, and an understanding of the world around them. Therefore, the availability of culturally relevant books is crucial so that children can see representations of themselves and their environment in the stories they read. When libraries fail to provide contextual and engaging reading materials, children risk losing interest in reading, ultimately hindering their literacy development. In this regard, research on the relationship between library function and the availability of age-appropriate children's literature can provide important insights for developing literacy policies based on the needs of children and local communities.

Considering this complexity, this research is highly urgent. Scaling up early literacy interventions is inseparable from a deep understanding of how libraries function in the context of basic education and how the availability of children's literature can be leveraged to strengthen existing literacy programs. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in designing sustainable, adaptive, and locally resource-based literacy intervention models. Theoretically, the results of this study can enrich studies on the role of literacy infrastructure in supporting basic literacy education policies. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for the government, educational institutions, and community organizations in formulating effective strategies to expand the impact of early literacy programs. Thus, the background of this study confirms that strengthening libraries and expanding the availability of age-appropriate children's literature are key elements in efforts to improve children's reading skills worldwide. Through a holistic, evidence-based approach, this study seeks to understand the relationship between institutional factors, the availability of reading materials, and the effectiveness of early literacy interventions, thereby providing concrete recommendations to support the sustainable scaling up of children's literacy programs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a literature review method to in-depth analyze various studies, reports, and scientific publications related to early reading interventions, the role of libraries, and the availability of age-appropriate children's reading materials. This approach aims to identify best practices, challenges, and key factors influencing the success of early reading intervention programs in various educational contexts. The review process was conducted through the systematic collection and analysis of relevant academic sources, including international journals, educational institution reports, and national policies related to children's literacy. All selected literature was analyzed thematically to identify patterns, trends, and research gaps that can provide a conceptual basis for the development of sustainable literacy programs at the community level and in formal educational institutions.

Furthermore, this literature review method also focused on evaluating the extent to which libraries' functions and the availability of age-appropriate children's reading materials support the development of basic reading skills in early childhood. The analysis was conducted by reviewing various library management models, child-friendly book provision strategies, and community-

based literacy programs proven effective in various countries. This approach enabled researchers to develop a theoretical and empirical synthesis of the relationship between access to relevant reading materials, institutional support, and the success of early reading interventions. The results of this literature review are expected to contribute to the development of more inclusive, sustainable, and evidence-based child literacy education policies and practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Availability and Suitability of Age-Appropriate Children's Reading Materials

The availability and suitability of age-appropriate children's reading materials is a key element in supporting the success of early reading intervention programs. Children's books serve not only as learning aids for reading, but also as a medium for fostering children's imagination, critical thinking, and emotional and social development (Hannah Olubunmi AJAYI & Lamidi, 2022). Therefore, the availability of age-appropriate reading materials must maintain a balance between the level of language complexity, story content, and the values they convey. In the context of libraries, both in schools and in the community, it is crucial to ensure that the available book collections are not only sufficient in quantity but also of appropriate quality and relevant to the developmental needs of children at various ages.

Age-appropriate children's books must be able to adapt to the child's cognitive and linguistic abilities. For example, early childhood (3–6 years old) requires books with simple text, repetition, engaging illustrations, and themes relevant to everyday life, such as family, animals, and nature. Meanwhile, elementary school-aged children require more complex reading materials, with longer narratives, a developing vocabulary, and simple conflicts that can stimulate critical thinking skills (Egbo & Osuji, 2025). At this stage, it is also crucial to provide books that introduce moral values, curiosity about science, and social and cultural sensitivity. Unfortunately, in many cases in Indonesia, especially in remote areas, children's books appropriate to the age characteristics of readers are often inadequately available. The limited collection of relevant and engaging books is a major obstacle to fostering an interest in reading from an early age.

The quality of children's reading materials must also be assessed in terms of visual literacy and narrative aspects. Children's books are judged not only by their text content but also by their design, illustrations, and layout. Illustrations play a crucial role in capturing children's attention and helping them understand

the context of the story, especially for children who are just learning to read. Expressive, colorful, and contextual illustrations can enrich children's reading experiences and help them develop visual and imaginative comprehension. Furthermore, the quality of the narrative must also consider authenticity, educational value, and cultural representation. Good children's books present characters and stories that reflect the social and cultural diversity of the community. This is crucial for fostering empathy, tolerance, and identity awareness from an early age (Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on the Challenges of Teaching Students Who Lack Age-Appropriate Social and Emotional Skills - ProQuest, n.d.). Therefore, in efforts to improve reading interventions, libraries need to consider not only the quantity of their collection but also the quality of the literature selected.

The diversity of children's reading materials is also an important indicator in assessing the adequacy of a library's collection. Available books should cover a variety of genres, themes, and perspectives, from folktales and fables to biographies of inspirational figures to simple knowledge books. This diversity of themes and genres allows children to explore various forms of reading experiences and discover their own literacy interests. However, the reality on the ground shows that children's book collections in many school and village libraries are still very limited to textbooks and donated reading materials that are often not tailored to age-appropriate needs or local cultural contexts. The books received are often from foreign publishers or donations that are irrelevant, both in terms of language and content, thus not supporting the development of contextual and meaningful basic literacy (Al-Obaidi et al., 2022).

The relevance of content is also crucial in assessing the suitability of children's reading materials. Age-appropriate books not only match the text's difficulty level to their reading ability but also must be relevant to the child's social, cultural, and emotional world (Aslışen & Hakkoymaz, 2023). Children will be more easily engaged in the reading process when they can identify with the experiences, places, and values contained within the story. Books that address local issues, regional traditions, or everyday events in the child's environment can strengthen a sense of identity and emotional connection to the reading material. Conversely, the dominance of books with unfamiliar settings and characters can make children feel alienated from the reading experience. Therefore, in the context of children's literacy development, the procurement and selection of reading materials must consider local wisdom and cultural

relevance so that books truly function as a bridge between children's personal experiences and the broader world of knowledge.

Furthermore, in the context of growing digital literacy, libraries also need to consider integrating print and digital reading materials. The availability of children's e-books and interactive reading platforms can be an important alternative for expanding access, especially in areas lacking physical facilities. However, the quality and appropriateness of digital content must also be closely monitored. Many children's reading apps on the market have attractive designs but lack literacy value, and some even contain advertisements or inappropriate content. Therefore, oversight and curation by librarians, teachers, and parents are crucial factors in ensuring that digital literature remains safe, educational, and developmentally appropriate for children.

The importance of selecting age-appropriate reading materials for children is also closely related to effective reading learning. Books that are too difficult can cause frustration and hinder children's motivation, while books that are too easy can reduce intellectual challenge and curiosity. Therefore, every early reading intervention program should include an evaluation of the reading difficulty level using metrics such as text complexity, sentence structure, and the number of new vocabulary words introduced. A scientific approach to book selection allows libraries and schools to tailor collections to children's literacy developmental stages, ensuring that each reading provides optimal benefits for their cognitive and affective growth (Dean et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the availability and appropriateness of age-appropriate children's reading materials are inseparable from national literacy policies and institutional support for libraries. Increasing the book procurement budget, collaborating with local publishers, and training librarians in curating children's literature are necessary strategic steps. The government and educational institutions must view the provision of children's reading materials not merely as an administrative task, but as a long-term investment in human resource development. By ensuring every child has access to appropriate, relevant, and inspiring reading materials, efforts to improve reading skills will not only produce technically proficient readers but also lifelong learners who are critical, creative, and empathetic.

Strategies and Challenges in Increasing Access to Quality Children's Books

Efforts to increase access to quality children's books are a fundamental step in strengthening a culture of literacy from an early age. Age-appropriate children's books are not only reading resources but also important instruments in developing critical thinking skills, imagination, empathy, and a love of

learning. In the context of basic literacy development, access to quality and relevant reading materials plays a strategic role in strengthening the foundation of education and opening up broader opportunities for children to develop according to their potential (Hartsfield & Kimmel, 2021). However, although the urgency of improving children's literacy is widely recognized by various parties, structural and operational challenges in the provision and distribution of quality children's books remain complex issues in various regions, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia.

One key strategy for increasing access to quality children's books is to strengthen the role of school and public libraries as centers of community literacy. Libraries serve not only as places to store books but also as spaces for interaction, exploration, and learning. Therefore, reformulating the library's function to be more inclusive and interactive is crucial. Programs such as children's reading corners, storytelling activities, and literacy competitions can be creative ways to foster an interest in reading from an early age. However, this strategy will only be effective if supported by the availability of relevant and engaging reading materials for children. These books must be tailored to the child's cognitive, emotional, and social developmental stages, and contain educational and cultural values that are contextualized to their lives. Therefore, the availability of age-appropriate reading materials is essential for building a meaningful literacy environment (Green et al., 2020).

In addition to strengthening the role of libraries, multi-sectoral collaboration is key to increasing access to quality children's books. The government, educational institutions, publishers, civil society organizations, and the private sector need to collaborate to create a sustainable literacy ecosystem. The government has a vital role in providing affirmative policies that encourage the publication and distribution of quality, affordable local children's books. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations can play a role in advocacy, librarian training, and the development of literacy-based learning models in communities. On the other hand, local publishers and authors also need support in the form of incentives and funding to produce works that are not only engaging but also educational and representative of the cultural diversity of Indonesian children. This partnership model will expand the reach of quality children's books to areas that have previously been difficult to access through literacy products (Vilar-Compte et al., 2021).

However, behind these various strategies, there are a number of fundamental challenges that need to be systematically addressed. Distribution constraints remain one of the most significant barriers to equitable access to

children's reading materials. Remote areas often experience delays in book distribution due to limited transportation infrastructure, high logistics costs, and a lack of efficient distribution networks. As a result, children in these areas have far fewer opportunities to enjoy books appropriate to their developmental stage. Furthermore, many regional libraries still face the problem of limited collections, with available books often outdated, irrelevant to the local context, or unappealing to young readers. This demonstrates a literacy gap stemming from unequal access to reading resources (Radez et al., 2021).

Funding is also a serious challenge in expanding the availability of quality children's books. Producing quality children's books requires significant costs, particularly in terms of illustrations, design, and print materials that appeal to children. Meanwhile, public purchasing power for children's books remains relatively low, so publishers often face a dilemma between maintaining quality and maintaining affordable prices. This situation results in a limited supply of quality local children's books compared to imported books, which often offer greater variety but are not always appropriate for the cultural context of Indonesian children. Therefore, policies are needed that provide financial support to local publishers and authors, for example through production subsidies, awards for local works, or book donation programs to schools in underdeveloped areas.

In addition to funding and distribution, librarian competency also plays a crucial role in determining the success of efforts to increase access to quality children's books. Many librarians in elementary schools and regional libraries lack specific training in children's literacy and age-appropriate reading collection management. Librarians are not merely bookkeepers but also literacy facilitators, playing a role in helping children discover their reading interests, understand reading content, and foster reflective thinking skills through literacy activities. Training for librarians should include an understanding of child developmental psychology, reading promotion strategies, and age-appropriate book selection techniques. Without this capacity building, libraries will struggle to become vibrant and inspiring literacy spaces for children (Organization & Fund, 2022).

Another equally significant obstacle is limited access to digital technology in some regions. While the development of digital literacy platforms has opened up new opportunities for the distribution of children's books, not all regions have adequate technological infrastructure. Furthermore, the use of digital books also requires digital literacy skills from librarians, teachers, and

parents. Therefore, the integration of print and digital books must be carried out with careful planning to reach all levels of society without creating new gaps (Timotheou et al., 2023).

Overall, increasing access to quality children's books is a process that requires an integrated strategy and strong policy support. The quality of children's books is determined not only by their content and presentation, but also by the extent to which they are accessible, understood, and enjoyed by children from diverse social and geographic backgrounds. The challenges of distribution, funding, and librarian training demonstrate that children's literacy is not simply a matter of reading, but also a matter of equitable access to knowledge. By strengthening synergies between the government, educational institutions, publishers, and local communities, and ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to enjoy appropriate reading materials, the goal of building a literate and highly competitive generation in the future will be more easily realized.

The Relationship Between Library Function and the Success of Early Reading Intervention Programs

The relationship between library function and the success of early reading intervention programs is a crucial aspect in building the foundation of children's literacy from preschool through elementary school. Libraries serve as spaces that not only provide access to reading materials but also create learning environments that support children's reading interests and abilities. In the context of early reading interventions, the library's function goes beyond simply providing books; it becomes a center for literacy activities that integrates the roles of librarians, teachers, parents, and the community (Goldenberg, 2020). Evaluation of the relationship between the quality of library management and the effectiveness of early reading programs indicates that intervention success depends heavily on the extent to which the library is able to provide age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and visually engaging reading materials for children.

Optimally functioning libraries support early reading intervention programs through three key dimensions: accessibility, collection quality, and pedagogical support. Accessibility encompasses the ease with which children and educators can access books and the comfort of the space provided for reading activities. When libraries are located in accessible environments and are designed to be child-friendly, reading activities are more easily integrated into daily routines. On the other hand, a collection of reading materials that is not

only abundant but also appropriate for children's cognitive and emotional development is a key determinant of the effectiveness of reading interventions. Books with the right level of difficulty and relevant themes help children better understand the content and increase their motivation to read. In this context, careful library management in selecting, organizing, and updating the collection is key to ensuring reading materials remain relevant and engaging for young readers (Petscher et al., 2020).

The quality of library management is also related to the librarian's capacity to fulfill his role as a literacy facilitator. Librarians who are competent in understanding the stages of children's reading development are able to provide recommendations for appropriate reading materials and develop supporting activities such as shared reading sessions, story-based games, or children's reading clubs. These programs directly strengthen early reading interventions because they focus not only on technical reading skills but also on fostering a love of literacy from an early age. Furthermore, librarians also play a role in building collaborations with teachers and parents. Through this collaboration, reading activities not only stop at the library but extend to the home and school, creating a sustainable literacy ecosystem (Hindman et al., 2020).

Numerous studies have found that libraries with well-managed systems and adequate collections contribute significantly to improving early childhood reading skills. For example, reading interventions conducted in a library environment supported by well-organized reading materials show faster improvements in children's reading comprehension, letter recognition, and narrative skills. This suggests that libraries' function as informal learning spaces plays a crucial role in complementing formal learning in schools (Dowdall et al., 2020). In other words, libraries can be a catalyst for transforming children's reading behavior, especially when they engage in enjoyable reading activities that do not create academic pressure.

The success of early reading interventions is also largely determined by the extent to which libraries are able to adapt approaches based on local needs and the socio-cultural characteristics of the community. In some regions, challenges include budget constraints, low parental literacy rates, and a lack of training for librarians. In situations like these, responsive libraries are able to develop adaptive strategies, such as establishing partnerships with educational institutions, civil society organizations, or the private sector to expand access to quality reading materials. Furthermore, the application of digital technology in collection management and the promotion of literacy activities can also

strengthen the role of libraries in reaching more children, especially in remote areas (Cervetti et al., 2020).

In the context of large-scale early reading intervention programs, libraries serve as supporting infrastructure that ensures program sustainability. Libraries provide a space for post-intervention follow-up activities, where children can continue to interact with appropriate reading materials. This is crucial because one of the main challenges in early reading interventions is maintaining reading habits after the program ends. Well-managed libraries are able to maintain this continuity through ongoing programs such as "reading hours," "storytelling weeks," or "parent-child reading sessions." Thus, the success of interventions does not stop at improving reading scores in the short term, but is also reflected in long-term changes in reading behavior.

In addition to internal factors, the success of the relationship between library functions and early reading interventions is also influenced by policy support and funding. Libraries managed with adequate budget support can regularly update collections, provide training for librarians, and improve physical infrastructure. Policy support from local and national governments oriented towards improving children's literacy will strengthen the library's capacity as a strategic partner in intervention programs. Conversely, libraries that lack clear policy support often struggle to maintain program sustainability (Hall et al., 2023). Therefore, synergy between libraries, schools, communities, and the government is an integral element in achieving optimal intervention outcomes.

Overall, the relationship between library functions and the success of early reading intervention programs is mutually reinforcing. Libraries provide the structural and cultural foundation for children's literacy development, while reading intervention programs focus more on improving basic literacy skills. When these two aspects work hand in hand with the support of professional staff, supportive policies, and community participation, the results achieved are not only technical improvements in reading skills, but also the formation of a young generation that loves literacy and possesses critical thinking skills. Thus, libraries are not merely an adjunct to early reading interventions, but an integral part of a system that ensures that every child has an equal opportunity to develop through the power of reading.

A Collaborative Approach to Early Literacy Intervention

A collaborative approach to early literacy intervention is a strategy that emphasizes the importance of synergy between various government agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and the community in

improving children's reading skills from an early age. In this context, libraries serve as the central hub connecting all elements of the literacy ecosystem. Early literacy interventions cannot be effective if they are implemented in a fragmented or sectoral manner (Teachers' Perceptions of Collaboration for Early Literacy in a Response to Intervention Model - ProQuest, n.d.). Instead, their success requires the involvement of various actors with complementary roles in designing, implementing, and expanding the reach of sustainable reading programs. Libraries, both within schools and communities, serve as social infrastructure that enables interactions between children, educators, and the community in an effort to foster a strong culture of literacy from an early age.

The government has a fundamental responsibility to create policies, regulations, and funding support that ensure the sustainability of early literacy interventions. Through relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the government can design a national policy that prioritizes early literacy as a key human resource development priority. This policy encompasses not only the basic education curriculum but also strategies for strengthening regional and village libraries as community learning centers. Regional governments play a crucial role in implementing this policy at the local level, including providing library facilities, building the capacity of librarians, and supporting community-based literacy activities. Cross-sectoral collaboration between government agencies, such as education offices, regional libraries, and social welfare institutions, is also key to ensuring that early literacy interventions reach all levels of society, especially in remote areas or those with limited access to reading resources.

Meanwhile, educational institutions play a vital role as direct implementers of literacy activities in children's learning environments. Teachers and education personnel serve as facilitators, guiding children's reading interests, integrating reading activities into learning, and collaborating with librarians to select reading materials appropriate to the children's age and ability level. Within a collaborative framework, schools can act as literacy centers, providing access to the surrounding community through collaborative reading activities, inter-school book lending programs, or "library day" activities involving parents and volunteers. Building teacher capacity in literacy-based learning strategies is also crucial to ensure interventions are not merely structural but also pedagogical. Higher education institutions also play a significant role in providing research, evaluation, and innovation in data-driven

literacy intervention methods, which can inform policy and practice in the field (Boavida et al., 2022).

Non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial complementary role in expanding the reach of early literacy interventions, particularly in areas underserved by formal education services or government libraries. Through community-based programs, NGOs often play a role in distributing children's books, training reading volunteers, and developing inclusive literacy modules. Their collaboration with libraries allows for more flexible and adaptive intervention models to local socio-cultural contexts. For example, literacy organizations can collaborate with village libraries to organize mobile reading activities, children's book exhibitions, or story-telling sessions involving parents and community leaders. Innovations such as mobile libraries, children's reading corners, and digital libraries for kids are also the result of synergy between non-profit organizations and government agencies that share the goal of expanding access to quality reading for children (Bricker et al., 2022).

Community involvement is the most crucial element in the sustainability of early literacy interventions. Community participation extends beyond being beneficiaries to acting as driving forces, ensuring that literacy activities become part of daily life. Parents, for example, play a crucial role in fostering reading habits at home by accompanying children, setting an example, and setting aside dedicated time for reading together. Community leaders, volunteers, and local communities can support program sustainability by utilizing libraries as open public spaces for social interaction and learning. The success of early literacy interventions also depends heavily on the community's ability to internalize the importance of reading as a foundation for human development, not just an academic activity. Therefore, a collaborative approach involving the community not only expands the program's reach but also deepens its impact on transforming literacy culture at the grassroots level (Blewitt et al., 2020).

Optimizing the library's function as a collaborative hub is key to integrating all of these elements. Libraries are no longer simply places for storing and borrowing books, but rather dynamic learning ecosystems. Through cross-sector collaboration, libraries can become social laboratories where children experience meaningful and enjoyable reading. The government can facilitate the digitization of collections to expand children's access to reading materials, while educational institutions can utilize libraries as integrative spaces for literacy project-based learning activities. Non-profit organizations can strengthen library capacity with technical assistance,

resources, or volunteer networks. Furthermore, the community can play a role in maintaining the sustainability of library operations, whether through book donation programs, volunteer activities, or the formation of children's reading groups. Thus, libraries serve as a bridge between macro-level government policies and the micro-level needs of the community, achieving equitable access to early literacy.

A collaborative approach to early literacy interventions not only expands the reach of programs but also improves the quality of their implementation. When all parties have clear roles and work toward a shared vision of building a generation of critical, creative, and empowered readers, efforts to improve early literacy will have a long-term impact on national development. Early literacy is not simply the technical ability to read; it is also a gateway to social equality and an improved quality of life. In this context, collaboration is the foundation that ensures every child, regardless of socioeconomic background, has an equal opportunity to grow in an environment rich in reading and inspiration. A library that functions optimally in this collaborative ecosystem symbolizes the shared commitment of all stakeholders to plant the seeds of literacy that will grow into a tree of knowledge in the future (Mondi et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study "Scaling Up Early Reading Intervention: A Study of the Functioning of Libraries and the Availability of Age-Appropriate Children's Literature" indicates that the availability of age-appropriate children's literature and effective library management play a crucial role in strengthening early reading interventions. The literature review confirms that children who have access to books relevant to their developmental stage demonstrate significant progress in basic literacy skills, including vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, and reading motivation. Optimally functioning libraries serve not only as book repositories but also as interactive learning centers that support children's ongoing engagement with texts.

Furthermore, the study found that the success of early reading intervention programs depends on the synergy between education policies, community support, and the training of librarians and educators in providing inclusive and engaging reading materials. The main challenges identified are unequal access to children's literature in remote areas, a lack of funding for the procurement of quality books, and limitations in curating collections that are appropriate to children's cultural and linguistic needs. Therefore, efforts to

increase the capacity of school and public libraries are key to ensuring the sustainability of early literacy programs nationally.

Overall, this study confirms that expanding early reading interventions is inextricably linked to improving library functionality and the availability of age-appropriate children's literature. A holistic approach encompassing strengthening literacy infrastructure, human resource development, and cross-sector collaboration is necessary to create a conducive reading environment for all children. Therefore, interventions designed with local social and cultural contexts in mind have significant potential to improve early childhood reading skills and reduce literacy gaps across regions.

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